To whom it may concern:

I am writing to file a commentary regarding the current Broadband Over Powerline (BPL) proposals that have recently come before the Federal Communications Commission. As a licensed amateur radio operator I have a vested interest in seeing the continuation of the FCC's longstanding protection of the amateur radio frequency spectrum. I will not elaborate on the many ways in which the United States amateur radio community has proved a benefit to the country—suffice it to say that amateur radio operators have made great contributions over the past century by both advancing the arts of electronics and radio communications, and also perhaps even more importantly, by enabling international relations and diplomacy on the part of the private citizen, as outlines in FCC part 97. Most notably, the amateur radio service is an educational opportunity for young people who are interested in science and technology.

It is this second aspect of the amateur radio service that I would like to comment on. I am currently submitting this commentary from Quito, Ecaudor. I am a 22 year old American citizen medical student, working in an exchange program in Ecuadorian hospitals. I was originally licensed as amateur radio operator N1TYF in 1995 at the age of 15. I now hold an amateur extra class license, the highest level of licensure. I have been active on the amateur HF bands (1.8-30 MHz) throughout my radio career. Currently I make use of amateur radio as a means of communicating with friends and family back home in the United States.

During my time in Ecuador many stark social contrasts between this country and the United States have become apparent to me. Perhaps most striking is the relative lack of basic science and technology education that is available to Ecuadorian children. Such a want in the educational system has direct and observable consequences on the economy and social stratification of the country. Thinking back to my school years I recall that amateur radio, a grassroots method of science training, was a motivating factor in my desire to pursue advanced degrees, which eventually led me into medicine. For years amateur radio has been one of the primary *amateur* forums for the advancement of science and technology in the U.S. I argue that the most important impact of this tradition is the recruitment of future generations of scientists that are so central to modern American life. In addition, amateur radio operators are afforded a unique opportunity to communicate with colleagues both within the United States and abroad both freely and with ease, utilizing a self-policing structure that is highly conducive to the types of communication that foster educational opportunities for young people, more so than the internet. In other words, to a significant degree the international diplomacy aspect of the United States amateur radio charter revolves, in practice, around education.

I believe that the United States amateur radio service is a model organization and a gem that symbolizes the spirit of private development by—and open communications for—the private citizen. Especially in light of the educational investment that the amateur radio service provides, at no direct cost to society, I believe that the government should naturally have a strong desire to protect the amateur service in any relevant respect, using any means possible when warranted.

It is on this count that BPL technology should be of serious concern to the FCC. If fully implemented, BPL would effectively terminate effective HF amateur communications in large parts of the country. HF operating is, of course, the heart of the amateur service. If the FCC does not take action to shield the amateur frequency spectrum from BPL interference it is essentially signing the death warrant on a unique

component of our society that deserves the utmost respect and attention from the government.

I realize that, in truth, the number of amateur radio licensees, approximately 600,000, pales in comparison to the overall population of the United States. Of course the FCC has a mandate to account for the needs of all of our citizens. However, the potency of the agency's decision making ability should lie in its ability to distinguish the circumstances in which the protection of the minority will lead to long term benefits for the majority of society. It is exactly this type of beneficial service that I believe the amateur radio community provides—primarily through its educational efforts, along with all of the emergency preparedness activity that is so poignant in our modern times.

In closing, I respectfully request that the FCC balance the benefits of widespread implementation of BPL technology against the profound impact such a development would have on the amateur radio service, a veritably important and valuable asset of the American people. I am happy to answer any further questions or to correspond in any further manner regarding the protection of the amateur radio frequency spectrum. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adam Kern
Amateur Operator N1KO